



NEWS RELEASE

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Kernan awards grant to Shelby County Life Long Learning Inc. to train area workers

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Joe Kernan announced today that five Shelby County companies will modernize workforce skills thanks to a \$34,500 grant to Shelby County Life Long Learning, Inc.

Administered by the Department of Workforce Development, the state-funded Incumbent Worker Training grant will help 15 employees from Freudenberg-NOK, O'Neal Steel, PK USA Inc., Plastic Moldings Co. LLC and Plymate Inc. with training through Shelby County Life Long Learning Inc. (SCLLL).

"Innovative partnerships among business leaders such as this one are critical to be successful in today's competitive global marketplace," said Kernan. "I am delighted that the state is able to offer assistance to Shelby County Life Long Learning and wish the employees involved much success."

SCLLL is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to furthering the growth of local business and industry. The workers participating in the industrial maintenance-training program were selected from an SCLL-convened group of employers interested in increasing the skills of their facility maintenance personnel.

"It gives us a great deal of satisfaction to assist in sharpening the skills of area workers while helping Shelby County and Indiana remain competitive in a world wide market," said Leroy Whitcher, executive director of Shelby County Life Long Learning. "We've also been fortunate that we've been able to utilize one of Shelby County's best-kept secrets, the Blue River Career Center "

Established through a cooperative effort of area schools systems, the Blue River Career Center provides vocational training to Shelby County residents.

In order to achieve the goals of the manufacturers, a two-phase training program must take place. The first phase will offer basic coursework for industrial maintenance technicians and will take approximately 18 months to complete. At the end of 225 contact hours of training, each worker will earn a customized certificate of applied learning and 15 credit hours from Vincennes University that may be applied toward a degree. The second phase of the program will build on the skills attained during the first phase.

Employing 189 workers at its Shelbyville facility, **Freudenberg-NOK** will use the grant to offer training to four employees. The company is the one of the world's largest producers of elastomeric seals and custom molded products and operates facilities throughout the world, including plants in Ligonier, Morristown and Scottsburg.

O'Neal Steel is one of the nation's largest family-owned metal service centers offering a range of metals and processing services. Employing 300 workers at its Shelbyville facility, the company will send four employees through training. O'Neal also operates plants in Evansville and Fort Wayne.

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Headquartered in Shelbyville, **PK USA Inc.** employs 405 Hoosiers and is a leading supplier of metal body, chassis and plastic injection parts for automotive companies throughout the world. Using the grant, it will send four employees to training.

"We are excited to receive this Industrial Maintenance Training Grant and appreciate the cooperation and support we received from Indiana Workforce Development," said Bill Kent, vice president of human resources and administrative affairs at PK USA. "As we invest in our most important and vital resource, our people, we remain committed to our training initiatives."

Also utilizing the grant is **Plastic Moldings Co. LLC**, which has been located in Shelbyville since 1973. The company, which is a critical supplier of brake and electrical components for major automobile manufacturers, will send one employee to training.

Founded in 1929, **Plymate Inc.** also will send a single employee through training. The company is a leader in the design and implementation of corporate identity programs and employs 73 people at its Shelbyville location.

"We are excited about this partnership between Plymate Inc., Shelby County Life Long Learning, Vincennes University and the Department of Workforce Development," said the president and CEO of Plymate Inc., Todd Plymate. "This grant provides us with a great opportunity to improve the skill level of our maintenance department."

All Indiana businesses are eligible to apply for Incumbent Worker Training grants. The grants are designed to create a world-class workforce in Indiana, through continuous improvement to the skill levels of Hoosier workers.

Through its various programs and initiatives, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development is charged with continually improving the Hoosier workforce by assisting companies create new jobs and improve employee skills. The agency offers a variety of training and educational grants, works with the state's 27 WorkOne Centers, administers the unemployment insurance system, provides labor market information, assists employers with preparing workers for layoffs and closures and operates the a statewide job placement service.

For more information on this or other DWD programs, contact Jeff Harris at 317/232-3396 or visit the web site at www.workforce.IN.gov.

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